

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1-106. (canceled)

107. (currently amended) An isolated nucleic acid comprising:

a promoter comprising two repeated nucleotide sequences 5
to 10 nucleotides long and spaced 17 to 23 nucleotides apart,
wherein the downstream member of said repeated sequence is
located 30 to 38 nucleotides upstream from a -10 region of a
bacterial gene,

wherein said repeated nucleotide sequences are selected
from the group consisting of ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38
of SEQ ID NO:6, ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID
NO:7, ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:8,
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:9, and
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-8, 10-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:10;

wherein, when present in a Lactobacillus host cell, said
promoter is inducible by a peptide having an amino acid sequence
of SEQ ID NO: 1 or of amino acids 19-37 of SEQ ID NO: 3; and

a polynucleotide of interest obtained from a source other
than a Lactobacillus cell, operatively linked to the promoter so
that the promoter controls transcription of the polynucleotide

of interest.

108. (canceled).

109. (currently amended) A vector comprising ~~an inducible promoter~~ a promoter that, when present in a *Lactobacillus* host cell, is inducible by a peptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or of amino acids 19-37 of SEQ ID NO: 3 and that comprises two repeated nucleotide spaced 17 to 23 nucleotides apart and selected from the group consisting of
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:6,
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:7,
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:8,
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:9, and
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-8, 10-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:10;

the promoter being operatively linked to a multiple cloning site for inserting a polynucleotide of interest so that the inducible promoter controls transcription of an inserted polynucleotide of interest.

110. (currently amended) The vector of claim 109, ~~wherein the~~ further comprising a polynucleotide of interest that encodes a polypeptide having proteolytic activity, carbohydrolytic activity or autolytic activity.

111. (previously presented) A gene expression system comprising the vector of claim 109 and further comprising a *Lactobacillus* host cell.

112-125. (canceled).

126. (currently amended) A kit comprising:

(a) the vector of claim 109; and

(b) a peptide consisting of an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or ~~residues~~amino acids 19-37 of SEQ ID NO: 3.

127. (previously presented) The kit of claim 126 further comprising a *Lactobacillus* host cell.

128. (currently amended) A vector comprising a promoter that, when present in a *Lactobacillus* host cell, is inducible by a peptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or of amino acids 19-37 of SEQ ID NO: 3 and ~~an inducible promoter~~ that comprises two repeated nucleotides spaced 17 to 23 nucleotides apart and selected from the group consisting of ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:6, ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:7, ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:8,

~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:9, and
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-8, 10-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:10;

operatively linked to a polynucleotide of interest that encodes an enzyme having proteolytic activity, carbohydrolytic activity or autolytic activity so that the inducible promoter controls transcription of the polynucleotide of interest.

129. (currently amended) A vector comprising a promoter that, when present in a *Lactobacillus* host cell, is inducible by a peptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or of amino acids 19-37 of SEQ ID NO: 3 and~~an inducible promoter~~ that comprises two repeated nucleotide spaced 17 to 23 nucleotides apart and selected from the group consisting of
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:6,
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:7,
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:8,
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:9, and
~~residues~~nucleotides 7-8, 10-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:10;

operatively linked to a restriction enzyme site for inserting a polynucleotide of interest so that the inducible promoter controls transcription of an inserted polynucleotide of interest.

130. (currently amended) A kit comprising:

(a) the vector of claim 129; and

(b) a peptide consisting of an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or ~~residues~~amino acids 19-37 of SEQ ID NO: 3.

131. (previously presented) The kit of claim 130, further comprising a *Lactobacillus* host cell.

132. (currently amended) A vector comprising a promoter that, when present in a *Lactobacillus* host cell, is inducible by a peptide having an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or of amino acids 19-37 of SEQ ID NO: 3 and ~~an inducible promoter~~ that comprises two repeated nucleotide spaced 17 to 23 nucleotides apart and selected from the group consisting of ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:6, ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:7, ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 30-38 of SEQ ID NO:8, ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:9, and ~~residues~~nucleotides 7-8, 10-14 and 31-38 of SEQ ID NO:10;

operatively linked to a polynucleotide of interest obtained from a source other than a *Lactobacillus* cell, so that the inducible promoter controls transcription of an inserted polynucleotide of interest.

133. (currently amended) A kit comprising:

(a) the vector of claim 132; and

(b) a peptide consisting of an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1 or ~~residues~~amino acids 19-37 of SEQ ID NO: 3.

134. (previously presented) The kit of claim 133, further comprising a *Lactobacillus* host cell.

135. (new) A host cell comprising the vector of claim 109.

136. (new) A host cell comprising the vector of claim 110.

137. (new) A host cell comprising the vector of claim 128.

138. (new) A host cell comprising the vector of claim 129.

139. (new) A host cell comprising the vector of claim 132.

140. (new) The host cell of claim 135 that is a cell of a lactic acid bacterium.

141. (new) The host cell of claim 136 that is a cell of a lactic acid bacterium.

142. (new) The host cell of claim 137 that is a cell of a lactic acid bacterium.

143. (new) The host cell of claim 138 that is a cell of a lactic acid bacterium.

144. (new) The host cell of claim 139 that is a cell of a lactic acid bacterium.

145. (new) The host cell of claim 135 that is a cell of a *Lactobacillus* cell.

146. (new) The host cell of claim 136 that is a *Lactobacillus* cell.

147. (new) The host cell of claim 137 that is a *Lactobacillus* cell.

148. (new) The host cell of claim 138 that is a *Lactobacillus* cell.

149. (new) The host cell of claim 139 that is a *Lactobacillus* cell.